

Tan Let's call her a feminist then...

Tan She didn't make any impression on us...

Tan We were young...

Tan She was strict.

Tan Well just that one person mentioned it but they said at work she was excellent. She was a perfectionist - everyone said that. Very strict, very precise, worked very hard and was devoted to what she was doing. Those are the comments I keep hearing about her.

Tan I would say that sums her up.

Tan Anything/one else... Marg Dunning...

Tan Marg Dunning?

Tan Dunning. I think she taught at the Y in Hamilton for awhile and I think she was also a counsellor.

Tan She was, but not very long. I don't think she made much impression.

JB: Another question I had was how long, you started going to camp when you were 12, 13, 14, 15, so you went to camp there for what? half a dozen years?

Tan I was there for 10 years.

Tan I was there for 11.

Tan We were counsellors most of the time. We were only campers about 5 or 6 years.

JB: So half the time you were camping and half the time you were counsellors. So then you would have also gotten to know the Margaret Eaton School students.

Tan There were counsellors from the Margaret Eaton School so there was a close bond. And we all knew Florence Somers too.

Tan Dorothy Jackson and Elizabeth Wardley.

Tan ...I learned to swim there.

JB: You learned to swim through the Margaret Eaton School lessons?

Tan Yes they had lessons and I hung on to the pole and my mother would come under me and pull me by the feet.

Tan What do you mean? You hung on to the pole?

Tan I'd hang on to the pole and gradually go into the pool for swimming.

JB: Who was teaching them? Margaret Eaton School students?

Tan I don't know. I guess qualified instructors or lifesavers or someone like that.

JB: Were they young women then?

Tan Oh yes.

Tan So many of them were probably Margaret Eaton School students.

Tan Miss Somers was there then.

Tan Oh she was wonderful. She was from Boston. She was great.

JB: What do you know about her then? Why don't we deal with her for a moment.

Tan White hair. I have a blur of how I know her. I went to college in Boston and I think it was through that I met her through that. I think she was much more talkative and open than Miss Hamilton really and easier to get to know. Miss Hamilton took a long time to get to know.



Tan Kittie Peppler is another student.

Tan Kittie is still alive.

Tan Did she go to M.E.S.?

JB: Yes. She taught there part-time.

Tan She's a great friend of mine but what can I tell about her?

Tan What was she a counsellor of, Nadine?

Tan Of camp crafts, wasn't she?

Tan Wasn't she there near the beginning though?

Tan Yes she was.

Tan Where does she live presently?

Tan She lives in England. Salisbury.

JB: Do you have her address then?

Tan Yes. Do you want her address?

JB: Yes, if I could I would like to write her a letter and I have a questionnaire for students who have graduated from the school and I have about 30 back.

Tan Do you have a card so we know where to get in touch with you?

JB: No I don't but I can write out my name a few times afterwards.

Tan I had lunch yesterday with a friend who was in the last class of Margaret Eaton School she would be glad to help and she could mention 2 or 3 other friends, I have their telephone numbers but I left them at home.

JB: I've only contacted one person. What was her name?

Tan Peggy Stewart.

JB: No I haven't contacted her.

Tan I can give you my sister's address because she went to camp and Margaret Eaton.

JB: And what is your sister's name?

Tan Edith.

Tan I went to see her last year.

JB: Which class was she in?

Tan When did M.E.S. absorb in?

Tan '41 or '42.

Tan She'd have been there in '40.

Tan ...she really looks gorgeous...

Tan She was one of the best divers, she and Hutch

Tan ... this is my sister...

Tan Beautiful divers. I used to enjoy looking at them.

Tan So did I.

JB: The class of '39 and the class of '41, I have most of them.

Tan Wasn't Mick Jarvis at M.E.S.?

Tan Oh yes.

Tan Her daughter is Cathy Seagram married to Richard Seagram and they live in Toronto. And Cathy said to me once that she was so pleased that her daughters were going to Tanamakoon, it's the third generation. Well I had never heard of her mother but it turned out her mother was a



Robertson from London, Ontario. But I can give you Cathy Seagram's number, the daughter...

JB: Did she go to M.E.S.?

Tan ...yes so did her mother.

Tan Her mother must be Leona?!

Tan No. We know who Leona is.

Tan I think Leona was in Barrie but I think she died a year or so ago.

Tan Did you every think this would lead to so many contacts?

JB: I was hoping.

Tan How long did M.E.S. exist then?

JB: Depends when you say it started. Most people say it started around 1901.

Tan When did it stop? You mean it isn't any more?

JB: No it part of the University.

Tan So it existed about 40 years then?

JB: Right.

Tan When you think of how Tanamakoon started because talking like this makes people vaguely remember, that Miss Hamilton went to quite a few people to put up some money for it and somehow in my mind I have Mr. Fennell.

JB: Robert Fennell.

Tan He was one of her bankers I believe.

JB: Do you know who Robert Fennell's wife is? Dorothy who is the daughter of Emma Scott-Rath Nasmith.

Tan Wasn't it true that Mr. Fennel put up some money?

Tan He may well have.

Tan He did because that is how she got started.

Tan As best as I can understand she got money from some people and paid them off as she got some.

Tan You know Mark Robinson who was head of the park, I don't know how much you want to go into this, he's dead, but his daughter - I rented a cottage from her for a couple of weeks this summer - Audalyn Madison and she's written a thing of Tom Tossler, I'll bet Hammy had something to do with Mark Robinson used come and give us talks.

Tan What did they call him?

Tan Superintendent or Camp/Park Superintendent.

Tan The one that used to fly the airplanes?

Tan Frank McDougal.

Tan He took me up in the plane ... I had a place called after me.

Tan A lake.

Tan Nadine Lake. And he took me up there to see it and it looks just like a boot.

Tan An old shoe.

Tan A dancing shoe.

Tan You see Miss Hamilton must have done an awful lot of negotiating and establishing rapport with all these people because they are just part of our lives really. Because I think Ontario is a leader in camps. I don't think there are camps in America that compare.



Tan There are some in Quebec.

Tan You can say all you like but there are no camps in the United States that equal those four or five like the Taylor Statson, Mary Hamilton and Mr. Cockrane in Tomoganee. Those were outstanding pioneer establishments and some how they have continued to be just as good as the people who started them so it's something we can be proud of. The American camps aren't up to ours.

Tan Well I don't know too much about them.

Tan No, I don't know too much about them either.

Tan Well Hammy used to have an exchange -- one of her campers would go to the States and one of theirs would come up here. Anita was one of the ones who went. And I have friends who's kids have gone but they don't have quite what we have I don't think. I don't know what it is.

JB: In terms of the campers, I was wondering where the campers came from. Where they mostly people from private schools girls?

Tan Yes, I think the majority was. We had quite a few from the States though.

Tan From Buffalo, a lot from Buffalo.

Tan And Upper New York. Rochester.

Tan Wasn't there the one of them that died who was from Rochester? G. Norton. And they have something named after her.

Tan But I don't think it was cliquish though. The people came from other high schools or something. There wasn't an emphasis on...

Tan There were some that were unhappy.

Tan I realize that but what I mean is that private school people didn't stick together.

JB: But in terms of most of the students they were from an upper-middle class kind of families?

Tan Yes.

JB: Another thing I was puzzled about, we have children of our own too and we spent some to camp and they went for one week but that was hard enough for me. But for parents to have their children go up there for one or two months I was wondering how that worked?

Tan Well just a minute. Look at the fee list and what the private schools cost now compared to when we went to school and the same with the camps they're exorbitant now. The same with the colleges.

Tan Mostly the teachers get better.

Tan Prices are very high.

Tan Both mother and father works...

Tan It was more affordable, just like taking trips was more affordable in our day than it is now. Everything is.

Tan Everything.

Tan Of course, and you said the camp counsellors made about \$25 to \$50 dollars for the whole summer.

Tan And we were glad to have that and holidays...

Tan You don't know because the kids have to work to put themselves through college and college costs a lot so I'm sure they get paid very good



salaries now.

Tan They probably do.

Tan And the teachers, when I was first married, in Huntsville we had a teacher there who was very good and was one of the high teachers, he got two thousand dollars a year. Now how can you live on that.

Tan So that's why you can't afford to send them and that's why they have one week periods and two week periods so it isn't so expensive.

JB: Well when Mary Hamilton in '34 was at the Margaret Eaton School she was making about \$1500 for the year.

Tan Really?!

Tan Listen Nadine, I made \$100 a month in New York. We do forget.

Tan I ran a war-time day nursery, I was the first assistant for six months then I was the supervisor in charge of 35 children who were brought to the house with the woman of the house and the students for \$1600 a year.

Tan What did stamps cost? Three cents?

Tan As long as you can live on it.

Tan Well you could never live on it today.

Tan Oh, never! You can't even live for one day on that!

JB: Mary G. taught at Branksome for a number of years, but did anyone go to Branksome?

Tan I did. But she wasn't there when I was there.

Tan She would have stopped at Branksome already by?

Tan What year? I went when I was 12 years old. Around 1926, no, that's when I went to camp. I was 7 when I went. 1921 I went.

Tan So she was not there.

Tan No, she wasn't there to my knowledge.

JB: She taught gym?

Tan Yes, that's right.

Tan I was in the gym when I was very small so I don't know.

JB: She taught gym and also did some things during the first World War she had this large fete and have about 400 students from the Margaret Eaton School and Branksome and put on these big displays in the arena. So she would take her P.E. students from Margaret Eaton as well as from Branksome bring them altogether for this.

Tan Well we did those things in the arena but we did Branksome girls. We did that all the time and I was head girl or marcher with the flag. And we round just like the Musical Ride.

JB: What's the other school you went to?

Tan B.S.S.

Tan Bishop Strachan and Branksome - those were the two schools that most of the campers came from.

Tan And Havergale.

Tan Oh, yes.

Tan Where did you go?

Tan Havergale.

Tan Havergale was the other one. Bishop Strachan, Havergale and Branksome.

Tan Branksome was the best. It was the fun school.



Tan What were some more names you wanted to ask about?  
Tan Those are all the names I had actually. There were some English school girls that came in the late '20s.  
Tan Yes, well we weren't there then.  
Tan It wasn't the '20s it was during the war during the '30s.  
Tan Maybe it was the '30s.  
Tan It was the end of the '30s.  
Tan Like '39 or so.  
Tan Then there was the role of parents and we talked about them. Mary G. didn't want much of them...

THE END



# Redeemer College



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Christian  
University  
College

November 9, 1991

On Monday September 2, 1991, I had the good fortune of being able to have lunch with six campers of the early Camp Tanamakoon years. By name they are: Gwynneth Sinclair Powell, Nadine Ysaye Mosbaugh, Helen Hobbs Whelpton, Margaret Seixas McLeod, Mary Palmer Worts, and Graham Stewart. These, and some others have, for several years, met on the first monday of every month, for lunch. We discussed their Camp Tanamakoon experiences, recorded it, and attached is a transcript of our conversation. I had a student, Angela Zondag transcribe the tape and I wish to thank her for a job well done; at times several of us were talking together and this made her job somewhat more difficult.

I am finishing my research on a dissertation on the Margaret Eaton School, and once that is completed I intend to devote more attention to Canadian camping experiences of women in the Twenties and Thirties, demonstrated in such camps as Tanamakoon.

To my lunch mates, a special note of thanks. In several months time I would love to do it again.

John Byl





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